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# LABOUR BRIEFING

**JEREMY  
CORBYN  
FOR  
LABOUR  
LEADER!**



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EDITORIAL:

JEZ  
WE CAN!

**THE RULE CHANGES HASTILY APPROVED AT A SPECIAL CONFERENCE** in 2014 as an act of pious loyalty to the then Labour leader could yet haunt our Party as it tries to pick a new one. Even before the shortlist was finalised, there was a widespread feeling that the number of nominations from Labour MPs for a candidacy to be valid was ludicrously high at 35. Given that, it was a major victory that Jeremy Corbyn made it onto the list.

Without him, the contest would have been truly dismal: three centre/right candidates, all committed in one way or another to continued austerity and welfare reform. No wonder so many Labour MPs were willing to nominate Jeremy Corbyn, if only, as they said, to ensure the widest possible debate. In fact, many were lobbied hard to do so. While they may not agree with Jeremy's uncompromising socialism, they recognise in him what is so sadly lacking in many of their colleagues - a commitment to principle, tireless devotion to his constituency, and a complete lack of ego.

Principle and selflessness definitely seem to be in short supply as far as the other candidates are concerned. Distancing themselves as fast as possible from the Manifesto they just fought on, all seem determined to embrace whatever right wing nonsense some media pundits claim will make them electable. That journey didn't work for Neil Kinnock, who over nine years moved the Party ever rightwards - and it won't work now. The SNP vote in Scotland especially was a vote against austerity. Further accommodation to the Tory economic and social agenda could make the loss of the Scottish vote permanent. Elsewhere too, the Party is unlikely to make gains by making itself indistinguishable from the government.

Particularly toxic is the candidacy of Liz Kendall, a leading member of the right wing Progress faction and vocally supported by the Murdoch press. Her keenness to "reach out to Conservative supporters and middle

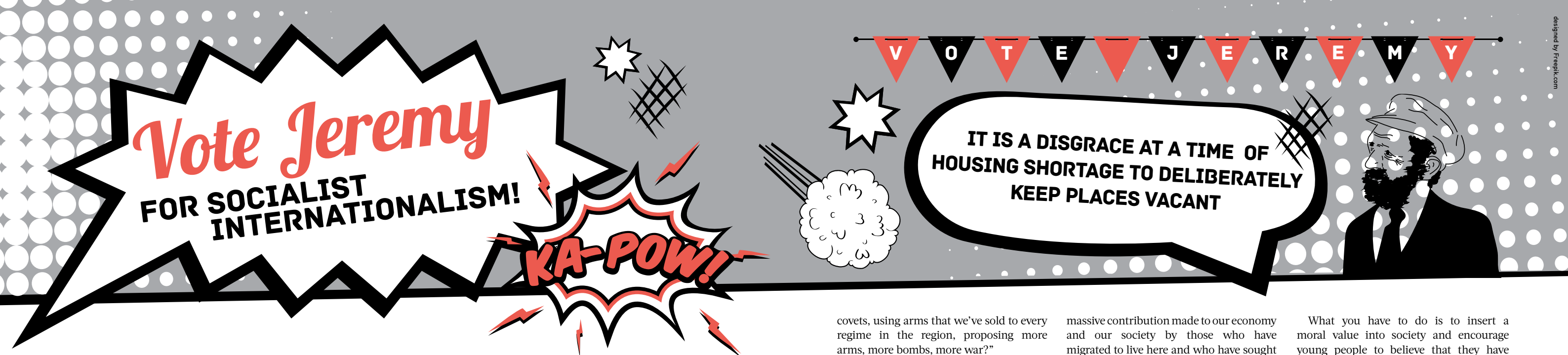
England" has largely collapsed into a dog-whistle pitch to do more for "white working class communities." Why is it that people like this only ever refer to the working class when they prefix it with the word "white"? As author Lynsey Hanley pointed out in the *Guardian*, "To encourage the suspicion that you've been forgotten about because you're white, and not because you live in a place where capitalism does not work in your favour, is at best misguided and at worst cynical beyond belief."

Jeremy Corbyn's candidacy stands in refreshing contrast to all this. Yes, it widens the debate and builds a strong platform from which to advance socialist solutions to the crisis. More importantly, it creates a framework to build a broad-based movement against Tory austerity and at the same time help reconstitute the Labour left. But above all, this is a contest that we're in to win.

We know that anti-austerity policies, proper funding of public services and rail renationalisation are popular, because opinion polls consistently say so. We also know Jeremy Corbyn is popular. Even before the MPs' nominations were in, he won a Labour List poll with 47% of the vote, with Andy Burnham second on just 13%. After a *Newsnight* hustings, a *Mirror* poll judged him to have been the winner over all the other candidates.

The tabloid media have already begun to dig up dirt on him for associating with Sinn Fein, Hamas and a variety of other organisations in pursuit of peace. Let them dig: Jeremy Corbyn's record of 32 years as an MP stands up pretty well. On all the big domestic and international issues he has been proven correct, usually standing up for what's right long before others felt it was politic to do so.

Last year's reforms to the leadership election process removed the privileged position that MPs' votes were allocated. It's now down to members and registered supporters to decide. The race is wide open. Sign up here to make a difference <http://jeremyforlabour.com/>. Jez we can!



# JEREMY CORBYN IN HIS OWN WORDS

What concretely does Jeremy Corbyn stand for?  
Heiko Khoo provides some insights

**THIS IS HOW JEREMY INTRODUCED HIMSELF** in the *Newsnight* Labour leadership debate on 17 June:

"I was first elected to Parliament 32 years ago, and I've spent that time in Parliament representing my constituency and standing up for rights and justice in Britain and all around the world. I believe that is the function of the Labour Party. But I also think that over the years we have lost our way. We've become cowed by powerful commercial interests, become frightened of the press, we've become frightened to stand up for what we absolutely believe in. I want a more equal society, I want a fairer society. I want a world at peace, not at war. I want the Labour Party to be the heart of the community that is demanding those things and demanding jobs, homes and hopes for everybody so that they can live in a society that is more equal. We're moving in the wrong direction at the present time. Let's turn it round and move the other way."

**A SOCIALIST INTERNATIONALIST**

Jeremy Corbyn fights against increasing inequality in Britain and the world. He points out that "the richest 1% of the world's population own 48% of its wealth... while the least well-off 80% own just 5.5% of it",

adding that "the wealth of just 85 people equals the wealth of 3.5 billion others... and that this supranational club of the very rich economic elites is not a solution to the world's problems. In reality, it is the main cause of them." (*Morning Star*, January 2015).

Jeremy is optimistic about political development in South America where "fundamental, exciting change has happened" that "permeates all the way through society." Speaking in defence of the social policies pursued in Venezuela under Hugo Chavez, he said: "Any country has the right to take into public ownership resources, industries and services. That is what a sovereign nation can do. This country has done that. We have just taken *several banks into public ownership*."

"The underbelly of Latin America is poverty and oppression, and the human rights abuse that comes from that. Individual human rights - the right to vote, the right to free expression, the right to free organisation, the right to religious freedom - are obviously important and are enshrined in the universal declaration, but people have a right to be able to live where they are, free from poverty. For many, the only way out of poverty is to escape, and one sees poor migrants leaving Guatemala,

travelling through Mexico to try to get into the US to survive, but being brutally oppressed at various points... We would do well to recognise that the way to prevent that is to encourage the economic development and anti-poverty programmes that are so important and exciting throughout much of Latin America." (*Hansard*, 3 March 2009).

**DEFENDING THE PALESTINIANS**

Jeremy condemned David Cameron's support for Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people. The "Prime Minister has continued an armed relationship with Israel, despite 2,000 people dying in Gaza. Does he not think it is time to suspend arms deals with Israel because of the appalling loss of civilian life in Gaza, the continued occupation of the West Bank and the continued theft of Palestinian land by the Israeli occupying forces." (*Hansard*, 1 September 2014).

Jeremy is a veteran campaigner against war and vigorously exposed the lies used to justify the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. In 2014 at a demonstration to stop us joining a war against Syria he said: "Why are we going into yet another war, into a region full of natural resources that the West so

covets, using arms that we've sold to every regime in the region, proposing more arms, more bombs, more war?"

On the emergence of Islamic State, he said: "Odious as ISIL is, it did not come from nowhere. Is it not a product of our past policies in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya and of the vast number of arms that we have supplied to Saudi Arabia and other countries in the region? That gives it highly sophisticated weaponry." (*Hansard*, 12 September 2014).

**AUSTERITY AND IMMIGRATION**

Jeremy opposes the neoliberal dogma that says austerity is the cure for economic crisis. "Greece is an interesting European example of what happens when the orthodox bankers say that the only way to deal with paying a debt is to impose austerity, privatise public services and lower wages - which of course then lowers tax income and demand in the economy as a whole." (*Morning Star*, January 2015).

Jeremy doesn't buy the story that immigration is a cause of economic crisis. On the contrary, he emphasises "the

massive contribution made to our economy and our society by those who have migrated to live here and who have sought and gained asylum in this country." (*Hansard*, 28 November 2014).

**FREE EDUCATION FOR ALL**

Jeremy campaigned against tuition fees in higher education and the abolition of the educational maintenance allowance for 16-18 year olds. He praised student protestors in 2010: "Most of the current generation of university students will continue to pay the existing and, in my view, exorbitant level of fees. They are protesting for the next generation."

When riots broke out in 2011 after police killed Mark Duggan, Jeremy explained their roots in the alienation of young people and poor relations between the police and the community: "It also comes in part from the more recent cuts that have taken place in students' allowances and benefits in general," he says. "So there is an increasing impoverishment of poor young people particularly in the big cities of this country."



Photo: Molly Cooper

What you have to do is to insert a moral value into society and encourage young people to believe that they have some stake in the society. And that is the problem. It is the social alienation, the impoverishment, the disillusionment of the young people." (<http://rt.com/news/britain-lost-young-riots/>)

**CORPORATE WEALTH AND HOUSING**

"I believe strongly in public investment in public services and public education. We need to tax the wealthy. We do not need a graduate tax or an increase in income tax to pay for it. Some £6 billion has not been collected from Vodafone thanks to a cosy deal with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. That is actually more than the total amount paid through tuition fees over the past year." (*Hansard*, 9 December 2010).

On housing, Jeremy says: "In London, houses, newly built flats and other places are being deliberately kept empty on the expectation of a rapid rise in value, so that they can be sold on without the encumbrance of someone living in them... It is a disgrace at a time of housing shortage to deliberately keep places vacant." (*Hansard*, 9 July 2014).

Jeremy refuses to join those scapegoating people on Housing Benefit and instead turns the argument against landlords that are "making a killing at the public expense through the housing benefits system." (*Hansard*, 2 June 2009).

Jeremy sees public sector investment for the long term needs of the people as the way out of economic crisis "to kick-start the economy out of faltering growth and to generate real job creation and rising incomes. With interest rates at 0.5%, a £30bn investment package can be financed for just £150m a year, enough to create more than a million real jobs within two to three years. And even without any increase in public borrowing at all, the same sum could equally be funded either through the two banks which are already in public ownership, or through printing money ▶



We reprint below an edited version of an article written by Jeremy Corbyn in *Labour Briefing* in July 2013. In the run-up to the referendum in two year's time, his socialist internationalism must be central to our approach

**BANG!**



# WHAT KIND OF EUROPE?

**THE LEFT HAS TO FACE UP TO TWO REALITIES** about the European Union. The first is that it has successfully developed a Single Market across Europe and introduced supra-national legislation to prevent public ownership of industry and enforce a free market in many hitherto state monopolies such as post and telecommunications. We have to be alive to the realities of the economic doctrine that has guided the European Union ever since its foundation, as the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952, as a bulwark against the Soviet Union. As the EU has expanded it has also developed a common foreign policy, military doctrine and very close relationships with NATO, and increasingly sees itself as a quasi-colonial power in neighbouring regions such as North Africa.

However, there are definite plus points from the European Union, such as the promotion of strong environmental controls across the whole continent, labour laws, such as the Working Time Directive, protection of employment rights and a whole host of social conditions attached to employment.

The turning point in much of European thinking came with the Maastricht Treaty and the Single European Act, both supported by the Tories, which established a common financial policy and led to the establishment of the European Central Bank.

As we unite around the issues of fighting austerity and cutbacks, this has to be done in unity with trade unions and popular movements all over Europe to oppose cuts and job losses. We need a collective European approach to decent employment and other standards and not allow ourselves to be sucked into the xenophobia of UKIP.

We urgently need a serious left alternative based on co-operation for peace, sustainability, full employment and protection of health and welfare services – all of which are inimical to everything UKIP and the xenophobic right stand for.

► (quantitative easing) to be used directly for industrial investment.” (*Labour List*, January 2015).

As a solution to the housing crisis, “First, we need a planning policy that enforces the need for social housing content on all sites, including office conversions. Secondly, there must be massive investment by local authorities in affordable council housing, with secure tenancies and affordable rents, not the market-level rent model imposed by the government. Thirdly, we need rent controls... and tenancies of at least five years, to reduce the level of insecurity.” (*Hansard*, 15 October 2013).

## NHS, RAIL AND ENERGY

He suggests that billions handed to GPs through the NHS should be subject to supervision and public control. “Some £80 billion is to be pumped through GPs, who will then buy in services. Who manages them? Who monitors them? Who checks on what they are doing?” he asks. (*Hansard*, 12 July 2010).

Jeremy believes that “anyone working directly for the public sector in any capacity should be employed by, and accountable to, the public sector.” (*Hansard*, 13 March 2012). He supports the “principle of having an integrated rail service, with integrated timetabling and ticketing for those who make complicated journeys.” (*Hansard*, 19 May, 2011).

Jeremy supports massive investment in “British manufacturing’s capacity for solar generation, either for hot water or for electricity... to strengthen those necessary and valuable industries in order to take advantage of a very fast growing market.” (*Hansard*, 18 July 2011).

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**Jeremy  
Corbyn  
for Labour  
Leader**



## THE JOHN MCDONNELL COLUMN

John McDonnell is MP for Hayes and Harlington and Chair of the Socialist Campaign Group of Labour MPs and of the Labour Representation Committee

**WHEN ED MILIBAND ANNOUNCED HE WAS RESIGNING AS LEADER OF THE LABOUR PARTY** there were calls for the left to stand a candidate. Jeremy Corbyn and I sat down to calculate whether we had the 35 MPs we needed to nominate to secure a left candidate on the ballot paper. We couldn’t get past 22.

At the Left Platform meeting on the Tuesday after the election defeat, I explained that we couldn’t realistically mount a challenge, but we delegated Jeremy and Kelvin Hopkins MP to check again what prospect there was of running a left candidate. The numbers came out the same and there were those in the Campaign Group who thought it would be better to back Andy Burnham in return for policy commitments.

There was also the question of who would be the left candidate. I made it clear that, having run twice, I would not run again. And with a heart attack only two years ago, I promised my family I would not put my health at risk. Many of us thought that Ian Lavery would make a good candidate coming from a solid trade union background – and that would attract trade union support. Ian declined because of family commitments.

The popular clamour from rank and file party members for a left challenge grew and, at a Campaign Group meeting, Jeremy agreed that he would put his name forward. Jeremy is my closest friend in Parliament and we have campaigned together, backed each other up and defended each other against all that has been thrown at us for over 30 years. He is one of the finest socialists I have ever met. At times, and on a number of issues, we have been virtually on our own in campaigning for what we believe to be just. Never has he ever let me down.

That’s why, although I was highly sceptical about whether we could secure a place on the ballot paper and even the strategic wisdom of running a candidate, I backed him 100% and organised the lobbying and cajoling and deal-making to get him on the ballot paper.

With Jon Lansman and Andrew Fisher I

put together a small team to secure the nominations. We worked tirelessly, talking to Labour MPs and anyone who had any influence on them. Ben Sellers and numerous comrades ran a social media campaign that threw wave after wave of calls to MPs to nominate.

By the Sunday before the Monday noon deadline we were only up to 18 formal nominations, but had got 26 promises. The Sunday was spent phoning all the MPs who could still nominate and pleading with them to give party members a democratic choice. On Monday morning along, with our team, I stationed myself outside the PLP office, and we started counting our nominators in.

By 11.50, with polls closing in ten minutes, we reached 33 with five MPs standing in the PLP office waiting to see if we reached 34 – and then they might vote to get us on the ballot. They were Ian Murray, Roger Godsiff, Tom Watson, Gordon Marsden and Andrew Smith.

Wes Ball, the PLP presiding officer, advised them that as soon as Big Ben chimed the ballot would close. I made a short speech appealing to them to let our members have a democratic say and that party members would not understand or forgive if Jeremy was excluded by just two votes.

With 10 seconds left Andrew Smith and Gordon Marsden swiftly signed and submitted their nominations for Jeremy and we secured the necessary 35 nominations. We owe them and all the MPs who nominated Jeremy a debt of gratitude for their commitment to party democracy.

Having a left candidate on the ballot paper has triggered a massive wave of enthusiasm for engagement in this election. However let’s make two things absolutely clear.

**First** this is not a tokenistic run just to put the left’s arguments across. Yes, we will use the campaign to get across a socialist analysis of the world and our policies – but we are also in this election to win it.

**Secondly** this is also a campaign to form the basis of an anti-austerity movement in this country – launched from within the

heart of the Labour Party.

Of course we need people to throw themselves into recruiting supporters and members to vote for Jeremy in the election – but we also need them to use their talents and creativity to engage in the debate and promotion of our ideas.

Use our websites, facebook and twitter to see how you can contribute and play your part. We are building a mass movement of resistance.



# WHAT WE CAN DO

[ Heiko Khoo offers suggestions for building a vibrant, grassroots campaign to support Jeremy Corbyn for Leader ]

**HOW CAN WE STIMULATE THOUGHT AND ACTION** to get the maximum votes for Jeremy Corbyn over the next two months?

Jeremy has two key strengths:

1. He is the only anti-austerity candidate.
2. He is popular with grassroots campaigners inside and outside the Labour Party and the unions.

Jeremy has built up decades of good will among the left - but how do we draw this base to recruit the voters we need? Jeremy has concentrated pockets of strong support: his constituents; party and union members, the anti-war movement, and countless international campaigns. We must target these specific groups to become supporters and vote for Jeremy. We have the big advantage that our foot soldiers are dedicated and seasoned campaigners.

Let's us start with the simple idea of 'Each One Teach One'. We should be able to get 500 people actively recruiting supporters online for 50 days in advance of the 12 August deadline. The online nature of this process makes things a lot easier than ever before - provided we consciously plan our work and act now!

Start today - contact your friends on Facebook who might be happy to become a supporter to vote for Jeremy Corbyn. If you can dedicate at least 15 minutes a day to

recruiting your friends to the campaign, this should be enough. You'll need to chat with them personally, but for sure you'll find several people who you can appeal to right away.

We need dedicated individuals to concentrate on recruiting from specific groups, e.g. specific unions, students, ethnic minorities, etc. There are tens of thousands of people who remember Jeremy's support for the struggles and who can be won as voters. To make the process extend outwards we'll need to keep providing new information and ideas from Jeremy's campaign in an accessible format. This can take the form of videos, online pictures and audio that have relevant messages, together with his quotes and speeches. These can expand on the issues that Jeremy is only able to touch on in the TV and news media.

We are basically running a mass education campaign on what socialism means today both in terms of critical analysis of capitalist society and a plan for a socialist future.

We need to ensure that our potential supporters are properly informed about fundamental socialist arguments. To do this we need online poster-like images on core themes, e.g. "Jeremy says nationalise the banks" and other basic information and viral material.

As a supplement we need interviews with Jeremy that explain questions in greater depth - and we need to construct material from past speeches and videos to succinctly explain Jeremy's views on the issues of the day, and his vision of socialism.

In this way we will firm up our support base and provide them with material to answer the questions they will face from others they discuss with online and face-to-face.

We will provide whatever useful material we can on the LRC and Briefing website.

## YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A MEMBER OF THE LABOUR PARTY TO VOTE FOR JEREMY

It costs just £3 to become a registered supporter and have your say  
<https://supporters.labour.org.uk>

Or if you're a member of an affiliated union or organisation it's FREE to become an affiliated supporter:  
<http://support.labour.org.uk/>

### DEADLINES

12 noon Wednesday 12 August  
Last date to join as member, affiliated supporter, or registered supporter

Friday 14 August  
Ballot mailing despatched

12 noon Thursday 10 September  
Ballot closes

Saturday 12 September  
Special conference to announce result

Or text SUPPORT to 78555

# MOBILISING FOR AN ANTI-AUSTERITY CANDIDATE

[ Naomi Fearon, Fleetwood town councillor, NEC member of Socialist Educational Association, LRC, CLPD and NUT member and Red Labour activist and organiser, reports on the online campaign ]

**THE LABOUR LEADERSHIP CONTEST WAS LOOKING GRIM** a few weeks ago until Jeremy Corbyn decided to stand. Many had dubbed it "50 Shades of Blair." Clearly a different candidate was needed - a voice from inside the PLP that recognised that there was an alternative to austerity and could echo the concerns of many grassroots members and supporters.

Throughout Ed Miliband's leadership, many of us called for more radical policies, with opposition to austerity being at the forefront. The need for these policies became even stronger once we were facing another five long years of a cruel Tory government.

As well as being a member of the LRC and CLPD, I am also an activist and organiser within the grassroots movement Red Labour. Here I was approached by Labour activists Beck Barnes and Chelley Ryan, with an excellent letter they had written to start a campaign to ensure the leadership contest had an anti-austerity candidate. To get the ball rolling, I set the letter up as a petition on 38 Degrees and shared swiftly on social media.

Once the petition was out there, there was no stopping it, with thousands signing in just under a week. The petition was shared on Twitter, with activists tweeting it to those MPs who they knew would listen. By the time the petition closed, it had just over 5,000 signatures, with many supporters still wanting to sign. It was a huge success and got mentioned in *Chartist* and the *Morning Star*. I like to think it played a part in Jeremy standing when he stated, "This decision to stand is in response to an overwhelming call by Labour Party members who want to see a broader range of candidates and a thorough debate about the future of the Party."

Why is it so important we have a left candidate in the leadership contest? As a democratic socialist party, the last thing we need is a pro-austerity platform where the candidates are united in celebrating businesses as wealth creators. As Owen Jones asked: do we want a Labour contest where all candidates basically agree, or do we want a real debate about policy?

Prior to Jeremy's announcement, I spent a lot of time discussing the leadership contest with many other grassroots supporters. The same issues came up again and again: the next Labour leader should promise no more austerity and privatisation, renationalisation of the railways and utilities, a social housing programme and job security.

When Jeremy announced he was standing, there was real excitement and not just from the left of the Party. Jeremy is a committed socialist and campaigner for peace, who truly believes and fights for the values upon which the Labour Party was founded, which many of us feel the PLP has lost sight of. He consistently campaigned against austerity and was one of the 15 Labour MPs

who issued a public statement pre-election, calling for a change in party policy on this. While other candidates tried to distance themselves from our proud trade union links, Jeremy happily stood on picket lines and supported countless campaigns against injustice.

There was an overwhelmingly positive response to him standing. Thousands of people signed an online petition on [change.org](http://change.org) urging their MPs to nominate him, and many more liked his Facebook campaign page. Now we must gear up for the next stage of the campaign.



"Jeremy happily stood on picket lines", here supporting the National Gallery workers

**JEREMY CORBYN**  
FOR LABOUR LEADER

A real  
choice.

[jeremyforlabour.com](http://jeremyforlabour.com) | @Jeremy4Leader



# CAMPAIGN FOR DIANE & JEREMY!



[ **Diane Abbott** urges us to support her for London Mayor – and Jeremy Corbyn for Leader ]

**I AM NOW ON THE SHORTLIST FOR LABOUR'S CANDIDATE FOR LONDON MAYOR.** And, after unprecedented pressure from party members and activists, Jeremy Corbyn is on the ballot for the Labour Party leadership contest. The shortlisting of Jeremy and myself is the curtain raiser for a summer of campaigning. What is at stake is nothing less than the future of our party. Because now, more than ever, Labour needs a leadership which will fight for our people.

The most pressing issue facing us all is austerity. The Tory cuts will decimate both jobs and services. They want nothing less than to dismantle the public sector and widen inequality. There has been a great deal of talk about 'aspiration' in the Labour Party recently. But austerity will crush the aspirations of a generation of young people. I look forward to fighting alongside Jeremy as the only mayoral candidate who is anti-austerity.

We also have to be prepared to go into battle against the welfare cap and the cuts in welfare which are hitting the disabled and our most vulnerable fellow citizens.

And we have to be prepared to be vigilant about civil liberties and the secret state. Government ministers have recently admitted that Jeremy, I and others have been under surveillance for years. We will continue to campaign for left activists, environmental

campaigners, trade unionists and other to have access to their files and find out who authorised this surveillance on their fellow citizens.

Very many in our communities want us to take a stand on peace and to campaign against UKIP and the toxic anti-immigrant culture which has infected Westminster and the media.

These are all vital issues not only for London but also the entire country. I was proud to be one of the first to nominate Jeremy Corbyn for the leadership of the Labour Party and look forward to a summer of campaigning shoulder to shoulder with him against austerity and for a better future for our country.

## TO SUPPORT DIANE'S CAMPAIGN

- Register and donate at: [diane4london.co.uk/](http://diane4london.co.uk/)
- Attend the London hustings - sign up at: [labourinlondon.org.uk/events](http://labourinlondon.org.uk/events)
- Recruit Registered Supporters to Labour at: [supporters.labour.org.uk/](http://supporters.labour.org.uk/)
- Promote the campaign on social media

 **Dianeabbott** Twitter: @DianeForLondon

# LEARN THE LESSONS



[ **Cat Smith**, newly elected MP for Lancaster and Fleetwood, looks forward from the General Election disaster ]

**WE CAN BE UNDER NO ILLUSION.** The 2015 General Election was a disaster for the Labour Party. We were all but wiped out in Scotland and failed to make anything like the gains necessary in England and Wales to prevent the Tories from forming a majority government, let alone obtain a majority of our own. Worryingly in many areas we went backwards - meaning we now need an even greater swing at the next election than we required this year, if we are to secure a Labour government.

It is vital that we learn the lessons from this defeat - but we must be wary of drawing lazy or simplistic conclusions. Following the 2010 election we allowed the Tory myth that Labour spent too much to go unchallenged for too long until it became the narrative widely accepted across the mainstream media. Sadly too many in our party appear to have repeated the mistake this year, swallowing the line of Tory

columnists that Labour lost the election because it was too left wing. The reality of course is much more complex. It would be ludicrous to suggest, for example, that we lost 40 seats in Scotland to the SNP because we were too far to the left.

In my own marginal seat of Lancaster and Fleetwood a refrain I heard much more frequently was that politicians, particularly those from the mainstream parties, were all the same. While we had many policies of which we could rightly be proud, our core economic message of fewer cuts, less fast did little to dispel this impression. Instead, after accepting the Tory narrative for so long our attack on the scale of their cuts appeared confused and did not inspire confidence.

We cannot follow the same path for the next five years. We need to offer a positive vision for voters based on investment, jobs and growth, building on the work of Nobel

Prize winning economists Paul Krugman, and Joseph Stiglitz and others. We should talk about reducing the deficit by challenging vested interests, for example ending the huge subsidies paid to private landlords, rather than attacking the most vulnerable and cutting the support which they depend upon.

The planned Tory austerity for the next five years will exacerbate the damage done over the previous five. Greater welfare cuts will place an even larger strain on the most vulnerable people in our society. Wages will be squeezed further and employment will become less secure as a result of legislation aimed at making our trade unions weaker. Ever greater sections of our public sector will be scaled back or sold off to the private sector - as shown by the announcement of the sell-off of our remaining stake in Royal Mail. As these cuts start to bite, now is not the time for Labour to be seen as Tory-lite.



# MURPHY'S LAST DAY AT THE OFFICE

[ Paul McFarlane reports ]



AS REPORTED IN LAST MONTH'S *LABOUR BRIEFING*, on 16 May Jim Murphy narrowly survived a vote of no confidence in his leadership following the catastrophic performance of the Scottish Labour Party in May's election. But given the closeness of the vote (17-14), and perhaps the manner in which it was obtained, Jim Murphy decided he would tender his resignation anyway. This was not to happen immediately - but after he had presented to the Scottish Executive party reforms which he would urge them to accept. On 13 June, the Scottish Executive was presented with these reforms and they were accepted with approximately two thirds support.

Readers may think it a little strange that fundamental reforms to the internal mechanisms of the Party were created and introduced by an out-going leader - in as little time as a month - without the consultation of the full membership and affiliates. The following of Jim Murphy's reforms have been accepted:

» One Member One Vote (a product of the Collins Review) will be introduced forthwith and will consequently be the electoral system used in the forthcoming leadership and deputy leadership contest.

» Councillors can now in theory run for deputy leadership provided they can manage to obtain a quota of support.

» The Scottish parliamentary lists will be reopened and selections for the lists will be redone. The shortlisting process for selecting list candidates will be developed by the Constitution Committee.

» Existing list MSPs will be automatically shortlisted but the membership will have the final say in deciding the list's running order.

» Only existing members will be able to vote on the lists once they are compiled.

» The prospect of primaries for selecting Westminster candidates was proposed but referred to the Constitution Committee.

In his communication article to Party members, Scottish Chair, Jamie Glackin explained the rationale behind reopening the lists:

"...the SEC today also took the decision to open up Regional List selections to as many participants as possible. We want to see the best candidates put themselves forward to represent our Party in the Scottish Parliament, **regardless of how long they have been in the Party** or indeed what sector they come from. We must accept that the Party has had an issue in the past in attracting more diverse backgrounds - **we want to open that process up to people from the third sector, from business, from trade unions, from academia.** If progressive people share our values of solidarity and equality then it is right that we do our level best to encourage them to stand as candidates. We will reserve places on the shortlist for sitting MSPs but at the end of the day it will be for individual party members to decide the overall ranking."

A cynic may be forgiven for thinking that the lists have been reopened solely to give modernising minded ex-MPs and external personalities the chance of becoming a Scottish Labour MSP. Only time will tell on how stringent the shortlisting system will be for those on the left who want to get on (or stay on) the list and what criteria will be applied to list selection. The devil may not only be in the detail but in the interpretation and application of it. For now, socialists and trade unionists need to put themselves forward for the selection panel and also for selection.

## CORRECTION

Apologies to Andrew Berry who wrote the article *Ayrshire Loses A Fighter* in the June 2015 issue.

The following paragraph was deleted.

"Despite Katy's opponent being an old fashioned tartan Tory type many on the left outside Labour such as the Scottish Socialist Party could not see past independence and unfortunately had a stall in Saltcoats High Street, one of the towns in the North Ayrshire and Arran constituency, calling on the public to vote SNP."

Further, paragraph 4 should have read

"The working class link with the party in Scotland is broken and will take a long time to repair. People could not see beyond Labour's betrayal. The SNP's commitment to anti-austerity was somewhat skin deep. Until very recently they opposed the 50% top rate of tax, supported tax cuts to businesses, enthusiastically supported TTIP and opposed the introduction of the Living wage in government procurements four times. And the SNP MPs failed to turn up for a vote against the Bedroom Tax"



# TAKING SCOTTISH LABOUR FORWARD

[ Mike Cowley reports from the recent Campaign for Socialism conference ]

FOLLOWING THE COLLAPSE OF THE SCOTTISH LABOUR vote in May, the Campaign for Socialism was quick to gather activists from inside the Party to consider organisational priorities, polling data and the salvaging of class politics from the current hegemony of constitutional and nationalist discourse in Scotland. Our Conference, *Taking Labour Forward*, was the first attempt to seriously reflect on the abyss into which the Party is now staring, how we got here and what can be done to arrest our decline.

Elaine Smith MSP and former North Ayrshire and Arran MP Katy Clark were among the first speakers. Both spoke on the critical need to re-establish Labour as the voice of working people and the problems that New Labour's 'austerity-lite' strategy, coupled with our alliance with the Tories in the Better Together campaign, has caused the Party in Scotland. Both argued that only through a return to our founding ideological commitments can Labour win back the support which has driven traditional Labour voters to the SNP, and re-establish our reputation in the eyes of a generation for whom the referendum campaign continues to symbolise the perfidy of a hazily defined Westminster elite. Graham Bash from the Labour Representation Committee and *Labour Briefing* also brought fraternal and welcome solidarity from the South.

Dr Daniel Kenealy of the University of Edinburgh gave an insightful and detailed overview of the complex factors behind the recent 2015 General Election result, placing his comments within the wider context of Scottish Labour's recent history. Drawing on his research, Daniel pointed out the critical role last year's independence referendum alliance with the Tories played in intensifying a trend away from the Scottish Labour Party in recent years. Daniel also raised the topical issue of what constitutional structure the Labour Party should now adopt across Britain. The merits and demerits of both federalism (which he supports) and complete autonomy for the Scottish Party were discussed with appropriate examples being cited from other nations. The issue

of projecting a positive narrative about equality was stressed, as well as highlighting the need for championing a 'double devolution' approach through empowering local government.

Our plenaries included Women for Socialism, Labour and the Trade Unions, Labour and Local Government, Labour and Youth and a final report back from Vicky Grandon, hotfoot from a Scottish Executive meeting convened to endorse ex-Leader Jim Murphy's parting organisational reforms.

True to form, Murphy relished the opportunity to take final aim not at the Tories, austerity or the growing inequalities within Scottish society, but at the alleged failures of ex-leader Johann Lamont and the perceived disloyalty of Unite General Secretary Len McCluskey. None of his suggested changes are to be presented to SLP members or affiliates. As exercises in democracy go, this one was hardly a vote of confidence in the

membership and its autonomous role in the kind of re-evaluation of policy and structure essential to our Party's survival. If we cannot learn the lessons of our recent setbacks - and a failure of Party democracy, never mind policy, is one area ripe for scrutiny - then we really will be relinquishing any claim to relevance as the Scottish elections loom.

Despite all of this, the many activists who gathered on the day articulated a confidence and energy which belied our circumstances. When you are rooted in your workplaces and communities, there is no hiding place. And even if on one level the day provided a measure of solace and solidarity in numbers, all of us departed with a renewed sense of both the size of the task ahead, what is at stake and why again we regard the Labour Party still as the only vehicle with the potential to transform our society in the interests of working people.



Katy Clark with Elaine Smith and Daniel Kenealy at the CfS conference  
Photo: Paul McFarlane



# BOUNDARY COMMISSION REVIEW LABOUR WATCH OUT!



**Roger Luffman**, Secretary Bournemouth CLP (personal capacity), advises how to deal with a serious threat

THE COALITION GOVERNMENT was unable to reduce the number of constituencies from 650 to 600 due to a revolt by its Lib Dem wing. Now the Tories have an overall majority they are likely to reintroduce their proposals to their own great advantage.

Estimates of the effect this review would have on the 2010 General Election result suggest the Tories would have won around 299 of the 600 seats, a great improvement on their actual result of 307 of 650. I estimate that, had the 2015 election been fought on these boundaries, Labour would lose a further 20 seats, further entrenching the Tory majority and making it extremely difficult for Labour to ever win again.

What can grassroots Labour Party members do to reduce this impact? Quite a lot, and it is an area where Labour has

usually not bothered in the past, leaving this to the local council officials where in control; or regional party officials, where not.

The Commission must follow guidelines laid down by Parliament when setting ward boundaries; i.e. numerical equality to within plus or minus 10%; geographical contiguity; boundaries to be based on prominent local boundaries - rivers, main roads and railways etc. Special notice is taken of extremely remote areas to ensure that community interests are safeguarded.

Where the new rules will differ is that the intention is to make numerical equity the leading criterion; but the other rules have not been abolished. This gives some power to activists and councillors in opposition groups. After all no one knows an area better than its local members. Some councils have recently had ward boundary reviews which either are,

or will be, activated at the next council elections. Many are still to be rewarded.

Party members can ensure they keep track of proposed reviews either by local means, or by the Boundary Commission website, then produce their own draft proposals, strictly following the guidelines but ensuring that the ward boundaries proposed are to our advantage! In some cases this might mean making a very Tory ward, but for the greater good! Proposals can be submitted directly to the Commission; or, in the case of Labour Groups in opposition, a minority report can be submitted. In the case of a Labour controlled authority it should be simple; give the officers their instructions to produce a favourable scheme.

Why the emphasis on council wards? They are used as building blocks for parliamentary seats.

**THIS YEAR IN HASTINGS**, April was not the cruellest month. It was May. The first week of May, when we failed to retake the Hastings and Rye parliamentary seat, and when Jeremy Birch, Leader of Hastings Council for much of the last 15 years, unexpectedly died.

Jeremy was fit, healthy and energetic, just 63. On the morning of 1 May, we went out into the town centre to give out election leaflets. And that's where he was taken ill, dying in hospital four days later. It was a devastating shock for all of all of us in the local party, and indeed to many people in the town. Jeremy was well known locally and regionally, and respected for his tireless efforts to get the resources we needed to regenerate Hastings. He was a local icon, an astonishing orator, and showed all the qualities a leader should. But he was also a personal friend and comrade. He was a worthy son of Hastings, a tireless fighter for what was right and good, and a true socialist. I shall miss him enormously.

The next day, we all went into the election count with heavy hearts, shocked by Jeremy's death, but thinking "at least we can win this for him". But it was not to be. Tory despondency dissolved as the evening wore on, and we realised that canvass returns had been spectacularly misleading. Amber Rudd, the Tory sitting MP, doubled her majority, to over 4,000. And as the national results came in, it became clear that it was a bad night for Labour almost everywhere. We had no council elections in Hastings, but Labour lost power in Thanet, where the new UKIP leader of this formerly ambitious council announced that he wanted Thanet to be a "boring council" providing only basic statutory services.

For Sarah Owen, our candidate, it was a devastating defeat. After a three year campaign, during which she'd knocked on almost every door in the constituency, the result was difficult to believe. We could not have wished for a harder working, cleverer, more personable candidate. Born and bred in Hastings, she'd been a care worker and had already dedicated her life to the town. By contrast, Amber Rudd had been a banker and scarcely knew where Hastings was when she was first elected. Some would say that she needs a satnav to find it now. But Hastings and Rye is always a difficult seat for Labour to win, especially after boundary changes brought more rural areas into the constituency. In the aftermath, it's easy to see that a lot of people who had fully intended to vote Labour simply changed their minds in the final days.

And then, after all this was done with, the third shock. As Jeremy's deputy, I was the obvious choice as the new council Leader, and was elected unopposed at the council's annual meeting a week later. It was a position I never expected to attain - and there are challenges to face up to.

Over the next three years, there's a £1.2m hole in a £14m budget we need to fill, on top of the cuts we've already had to make. There are some further savings we'll be able to make, primarily through better use of innovative IT systems and online service applications. But we'll also be looking for more external funding - EU grants in particular, where the council already has a good record, and is a sought-after partner for new funding bids. And there are entirely new, self-funding services - for example, the private landlord licensing scheme, which will force rogue landlords to improve their properties and set up proper tenancy agreements, funded from the licence fees.

But we're also going to look at how we can raise money, by competing with the private sector to provide paid-for and contract services. We want to be more 'entrepreneurial', but the kind of entrepreneurialism that generates funding for public services, not private profit. This is entrepreneurial socialism!

So we're down, but not out. We have three by-elections to fight on July 9; Jeremy's county and borough seats, plus another borough seat vacated by a Tory resignation. And we have no intention of running an 'incredible shrinking council' that cuts

back its services until there's nothing left. We will do everything we can to fight for the resources we need to protect council jobs and provide the services local people need. If the government won't give us the money, we'll have to find other ways. It will be difficult. It should be innovative. It could be controversial. But it will never be boring.



# NEVER BORING IN HASTINGS

New Council Leader, **Peter Chowney**, reports on testing times for Labour - but is prepared for a fight



# INVISIBLE

Leo Doran  
invisible Existence  
#Feminist #Electronic #Musician  
irateirate.com

Leo Doran suffers from narcolepsy, a sleep disorder which affects the brain's ability to regulate the normal sleep-wake cycle. She describes her experiences in the workplace and wider society, her rage and her growing sense of strength as she fights back against injustice

**REMEMBER HOW WHEN YOU WERE A KID THERE WERE GOODIES AND BADDIES**, the Tories were scum, each story had a moral and everything ended happily ever after? One day you realised that it is the baddies who are rewarded, some people actually support the Tories, nothing has a moral and things can just be shit.

I know this because at the ripe age of 31 I am now disappointed, cynical and exhausted. It was not always like this - yes, like everyone else I was once bright-eyed, hardworking and 'aspirational'. However, a strangling sense of loss grips me. Why? Because over the past few years I have learned what it means to be disabled. I never wanted to be different. The distinct recognisable symptoms of narcolepsy started to appear in my early teens and I was diagnosed with the dreaded chronic condition at 17. My family told me not to tell people and so, on the whole, I didn't. Given how rare narcolepsy is, the only time I ever mentioned it was if my hand was forced, for

example telling university authorities because I might otherwise be penalised. As my cataplexy (an episode of muscular weakness triggered by strong emotions such as laughter, anger and surprise) became worse and more frequent, I lived in absolute terror because at any time I could collapse completely to the floor - and how would I be able to hide it (actually this did

**"DISABLED PEOPLE ARE BEING PERSECUTED ON A LARGE AND HORRIFYING SCALE."**

happen and I managed to persuade people I had just fainted)? I would be criticised, disadvantaged, laughed at, mocked, and dismissed - for things that were not my fault. Disciplined for just being the way I am.

So I forced myself to hide it so well that no one would ever guess. Only people close to me would see the price of this charade. I would keep my positive waking hours for the general public and shut myself away when I was unable to keep up the performance. I made sure no one ever saw me sleeping on the toilet floor (something I still have to do more than once daily), anticipated possible risks of episodes and rehearsed my 'one liners' to casually cover up when needed. And I became so good at lying. Disabled people were 'over there' - in wheelchairs or with guide dogs. They were people to be treated compassionately and kindly but they were not people like me. I could not accept myself. How are you meant to cope with being told at 17 that your life will always be a struggle? It seemed better not to think about it.

Then the best and the worse thing happened to me - I no longer could blag it. I would have probably have done anything to be 'normal' and to hide my disability. I just

# EXISTENCE

couldn't. It is not just the unavoidable nature of the decline. It is not just the heartbreak and pain of the actual descent. No, far worse is having to smile, wave and pretend that everything is okay - or that this is just a little blip and I will be back on track soon.

Most people rally to a crisis. Everyone loves drama or adversity that is overcome. But it is the chronic and day-to-day element that is at the crux of disability. There is no glamour and melodrama but daily struggle, pain and discrimination in every aspect of our lives. Activities that others may take for granted, like

taking a train, going shopping, having a bath or cooking a meal, become dangerous, risky and, at times, impossible. There is no break from it and it never goes away. Watching people watching me - patiently (and then not so patiently) waiting for me to get better, kindly advising me how to manage things with banal healthy lifestyle tips and assuring me, in a gradually more panicked tone, of the rights afforded to everyone, is just soul destroying. It is fear that I see in the world's eyes because I will never be cured. I literally embody society's failings and destructive contradictions - as I am a problem capitalism can never really solve.

When I had to declare my condition to my line manager, she looked uncomfortable and then uncertain, asking 'but you can take medication to sort it?' Stupidly I reassured her but of course, this is far from the truth. There is no pill to make me 'normal'. I am different - my life is different. I never really sleep for longer than about four hours (and even then I rarely get the right 'type' of sleep) and therefore I am never awake for more than around four hours.

A daily prescribed cocktail of meds try to artificially remedy this so I can be forced into the 9-5 regime. A large part of the 'disabling' of my condition stems from this - society's total inability to incorporate difference.

The violence of trying to force my body to

fit into moulds that will never fit, causes exhaustion, isolation, physical pain, fibromyalgia, lowered immune system, infections. My recent bodily decline has been so quick and brutal it feels as though I am ageing ten years for every twelve months.

Misunderstanding and isolation spark a terrible silent scream that makes me feel like I am shouting from behind a sound proofed window, desperate to be comprehended. Even my GP tells me, without apology, that she "knows nothing about narcolepsy" and I am often trapped in a yoyo between her and my specialist (not

least about funding my treatment).

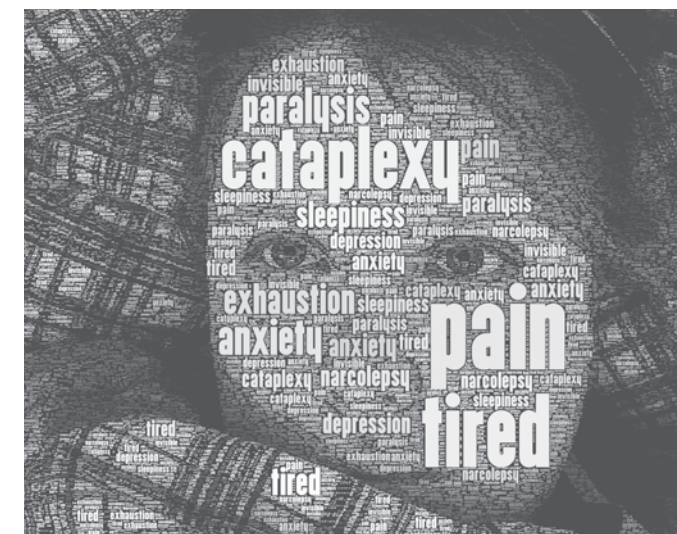
Of course, for me there were no 'reasonable adjustments'. Just because a vague phrase is written in law doesn't mean it has anything to do with reality. Now, as I am having to give up my job (even though I have already been struggling on a part time wage) and start applying for benefits, I face not only poverty and hardship but bullying, humiliation and disrespect from the very people who are meant to help. As I watch with envy people I know, getting on with their lives, buying their houses, having children, excelling in

their careers - a question throbs, 'what will happen to me?'

I wish I could end these reflections with an inspiring paragraph of hope - but I can't. I wish I could evoke clichéd optimism, declaring that my disability doesn't stop me from doing anything - but this is not true. I will not allow you to stick your head in the sand. Disabled people are being persecuted on a large and horrifying scale. The austerity years require far more than reformist delusions trying to bodge contradictions. You must turn to face the harsh reality of our existence, just as I have been forced to.

I will not suffer silently at the margins of society. I will not try to make myself acceptable to your norms. The more I am ignored, the louder I shall scream. The more I am trampled down, the greater my burning rage against injustice. Recently my skin has felt much more comfortable - softened by a sense of belonging in the tradition of disabled warriors who have to love and accept themselves even when no one else can; learn to reinvent themselves as more and more doors are closing; and dare to fight even when the odds are against them. Because I have narcolepsy and I will never apologise for it again. Because I am disabled and, even as my body fails, I have never felt stronger.

» [www.narcolepsy.org.uk/news/pleasesignpetition](http://www.narcolepsy.org.uk/news/pleasesignpetition).





# PROTEST AGAINST IMMIGRATION DETENTION CENTRES

Eiri Ohtani, co-ordinator of the Detention Forum, reports on a growing protest movement

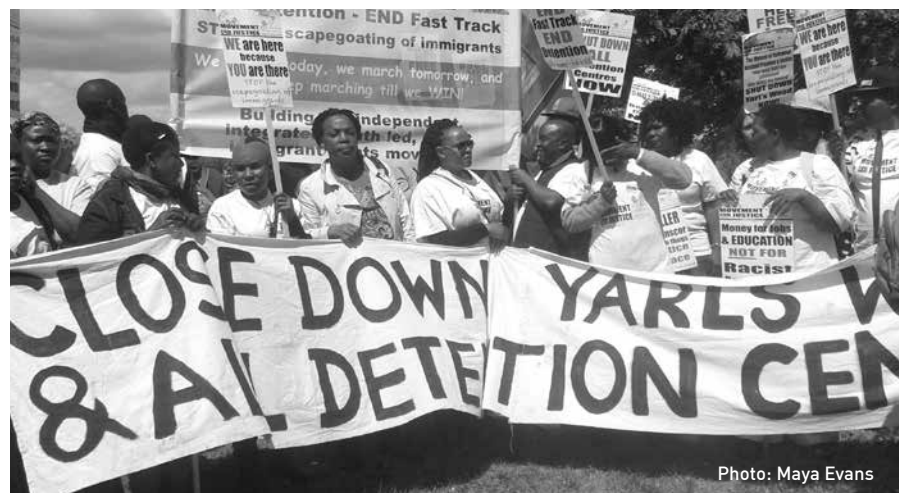


Photo: Maya Evans

2015, about 50% of those who left detention went back to the community, having been severely scarred by this experience.

Just before the General Election campaign the first ever parliamentary inquiry into the use of immigration detention centres published its damning report, criticising the UK for detaining far too many people for far too long. Its cross-party inquiry panel recommended that the incoming government starts a radical reform of this inhumane and expensive system, starting with introducing a 28 day time limit on immigration detention. The strength of the inquiry recommendations even pushed the Labour Party into including a pledge to introduce a time limit on detention in their election manifesto.

The inquiry heard evidence from many 'experts-by-experience' – those who are still in detention and those who have been released back to the community. Every 'expert' gave evidence to demonstrate the severe mental and physical damage detention causes, and how it negatively impacts on their family, friends and loved ones. Detention does not stop at the gate of the detention centres – some of these 'experts' are bound to be your community members.

Immigration detention is the ultimate result of the pervasive anti-immigration rhetoric, which is based largely on the idea that immigrants are to blame for worsening inequality. Just like the growing anti-detention movement, there is a burgeoning community-led challenge to this hostile environment, in which landlords, health workers, banks and others have been turned into immigration officers.

You might not have a detention centre nearby but you can challenge this hostile environment at the local level by assisting local groups (see [www.righttoremain.org](http://www.righttoremain.org)) or joining a national network like "No Xenophobia.org".

If and when enough people say No, we are likely to see a sea-change in the way immigrants are treated in this country, including the use of detention.

» [www.detentionforum.org.uk](http://www.detentionforum.org.uk)

# SHUT IT DOWN!

Maya Evans reports on the recent Yarl's Wood protest

AT LEAST 600 PROTESTERS, MOSTLY WOMEN, gathered at Yarl's Wood detention centre on 6 June to protest against the continued imprisonment of around 400 asylum seekers.

Many protesters had actually been detained in Yarl's Wood at some point. Some were refugees, others had some kind of direct connection, making the protest very personal.

The privately run detention centre recently received national attention after being highlighted as an "inhuman" establishment following allegations of abuse made against Serco staff.

The protest started at the side of the prison-like complex with speeches from women and loud singing and chanting before departing for a walk around the fence, eventually arriving at the building where most of the detainees are being kept.

Only the hands of the detainees could be seen waving from windows which open just a few inches. The window glass was one way, making it impossible to see faces.

Protesters chanted "shut it down", then left space to hear what the people inside were shouting – the word "freedom" floated back.

Around 30 protesters were already at the outer fence and within a few minutes the wire fence had been pulled down using manual strength alone. Half a dozen police officers in blue bibs looked bewildered as the female led protest responded to the calls of their sisters.

The next Yarl's Wood protest will take place on 8 August. For anyone wondering where the next generation of Suffragettes and Angela Daves are, they're at the Yarl's Wood protests.



# HACKNEY A PLACE FOR EVERYONE EVEN THE HOMELESS?

Joe Walker, Vice-Chair Hackney CLP and Director Round Chapel Neighbourhood Project, describes Hackney Council's decision to stigmatise rough sleepers as disastrous



HOMELESSNESS IS A CRITICAL SOCIAL ISSUE IN OUR COUNTRY. After years of declining trends under the last Labour government, homelessness over the past five years under the Tories rose by 55%. Charities have recently warned that the government's plan to cut housing benefit for 18-21 year olds could see thousands of young people, unable to live with their parents, end up living rough on the streets. Labour councils across the country will be disproportionately affected as the party controls local government in many of the UK's poorest communities where welfare cuts will be felt most acutely. Labour councils should not only be opposing these cuts, but ensuring that their policies protect the most vulnerable and poorest in our communities.

So Hackney Council's inclusion of rough sleepers in its Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) was disastrous. This policy was not made by collective agreement, and many councillors first heard about it when the story broke in the local press. After bad publicity in some national papers and a petition signed by more than 80,000 people, the Council bowed to pressure and removed rough sleepers from the PSPO. This is a welcome development and the right thing to do. The Council insists, "The PSPO is not about criminalising the homeless." This is no doubt true, but anger and disappointment persists from

residents and campaign groups that a culture of stigmatising the street community is creeping into the local discourse in a borough that is becoming increasingly gentrified.

The more potent issue is that a decision had been made to discriminate against the homeless community, however misinterpreted it might have been by the press, and this has been taken without proper consultation. Why had this ever been considered, especially by a Labour council? This was a political own goal, with the repercussions of such a decision likely to reverberate within the local Labour Party for some time.

I'm proud of what a Labour-run council has done in Hackney, but when issues like the PSPO arise, it is only right that we as a movement speak out and are prepared to criticise decisions made by the council that do not reflect our values and principles. We must show that as a party we stand in solidarity with the most marginalised and vulnerable in our communities and not get caught up in threatening court orders, fines and stigmatisation. The council's vision for Hackney is "a place for everyone".

With housing benefit reform and unemployment high on the agenda, the council must ensure that those who are forced to call the streets their home are also included, protected and supported.



# WHO ARE THE REAL “EXTREMISTS”?

Michael Calderbank, Secretary of Brent Central CLP and co-editor of *Red Pepper* magazine, warns that the government attacks on civil liberties are acts of class war

WHILE THE TORIES’ FRONTAL ATTACK on union rights understandably grabbed the headlines, the Trade Unions Bill is not the only piece of legislation that contains measures which could be used against working people. The Investigatory Powers Bill represents a souped-up version of the “Snooper’s Charter” which the previous government was forced to drop, such were the concerns over the mass scale of the surveillance powers it contained. Meanwhile, the Extremism Bill will introduce powers aimed at interrupting and preventing political radicalisation not just of a right wing Islamist character but using a definition potentially wide enough to encompass industrial militancy and other forms of left, environmentalist and anticapitalist protest.

Questions of civil liberties and the right to privacy are sometimes caricatured as of concern only to *Guardian* readers and liberal lawyers. On the contrary, any attempt to increase the availability of potentially repressive powers at the disposal of the state in a capitalist society is clearly a class question. Just think of the role of MI5 in infiltrating the National Union of Mineworkers in the 1984-85 strike, extensively documented by Seumas Milne in the *The Enemy Within*.

More recently, the extent of state surveillance and police infiltration in trade unions along with other left, environmentalist, anti-racist and family justice campaigns has been dramatically highlighted by the revelations of former “special operations” Metropolitan Police operative Peter Francis. He claims that to his knowledge the police and GCHQ had covertly monitored Unison, the Fire Brigades Union, the Communication Workers Union, the National Union of Teachers, and the construction workers union UCATT. Likewise, in their book *Blacklisted*, Dave Smith and Phil Chamberlain document how the construction firms

involved were given a detailed powerpoint presentation by a senior MI5 officer.

The US whistleblower Edward Snowden revealed that the US and UK governments were secretly involved in mass surveillance of the communications (emails, texts, calls and social media messaging) of its citizens on an industrial scale via the PRISM programme in the US and a similar programme called TEMPORA in the UK. Civil Liberties organisations, including Liberty, recently brought a case to the secretive Investigatory Powers Tribunal (which hears much of the evidence in secret, and whose judgements cannot be appealed),



Edward Snowden

which for the first time in the course of its existence found that the government had acted unlawfully in failing to make public the legal powers under which it was accessing material secretly obtained by foreign agencies.

In the course of the tribunal hearing, Director of the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism Charles Farr (in an eerie echo of the *Bird and Fortune* sketches lampooning Whitehall officials), explained in a witness statement that because sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Google and YouTube were based offshore,

communications between UK residents could be classified as “external communications”, meaning that no warrant is needed to access the data. As a result the operational policy of GCHQ is that mass surveillance on every individual who uses these sites is legitimate, irrespective of whether there are any grounds to believe any wrongdoing is involved.

In his recent report into investigatory powers, David Anderson QC has found that the present legal framework covering this area is “undemocratic, unnecessary and intolerable”, and must be replaced by a new single and clear piece of legislation. He did not rule that bulk collection of our personal data should be automatically unlawful, but does suggest that the security agencies need to make a “a rigorous assessment conducted of the lawfulness, likely effectiveness, intrusiveness and cost of requiring such data to be retained” before going ahead.

The government has already signalled its intention to move ahead with wide-ranging new powers requiring internet service providers and mobile phone operators to harvest and retain huge amounts of personal communications data, but there will be a real fight to ensure that the safeguards suggested by Anderson are enacted.

Meanwhile, we await the publication of the Extremism Bill, which we are told will “strengthen government and law enforcement powers to stop extremists promoting views and behaviour that undermine British values”, including introducing powers to ban groups altogether, close down premises and prevent individuals “engaging in extremist behaviour” and, in an echo of the ludicrous ‘silencing’ of Gerry Adams in the ‘80s, restrict access to the airwaves. While Home Secretary Theresa May will claim to be protecting communities from a terrorist threat, there is every reason to fear that powers that can be used by the State against people purely on the basis of their political ideas, can and will be used against the left.

# THE FUTURE OF RAIL IN EUROPE: LEARNING FROM THE MISTAKES OF THE PAST

By Sharon Sukhram, TUC Policy Officer

**RAIL PRIVATISATION IN THE UK HAS FAILED TO DELIVER.** We were promised cheaper fares, better services and increased private sector investment, but these have never materialised.

Despite this, UK rail liberalisation and privatisation is being held up as an example of resounding success in the European Union, and in part is being used to justify the need for new regulations which make up the Fourth Railway Package. These regulations would make the opening up of rail passenger services across Europe mandatory, and enforce the separation of train operations and rail infrastructure – which has led to so much fragmentation, inefficiency and cost in the UK. If the package is passed into law, a return to public ownership of rail in the UK will not be possible.

Ahead of debates on the package in Europe, policy makers, legal experts, industry representatives and unions met in Brussels to discuss lessons to be learned from rail liberalisation, particularly in the UK and Sweden. The briefing panel included Jens Nilsson MEP, Per-Ola Fällman (Swedish Union for Service and Communications Employees - SEKO), Dr Ian Taylor (Transport for Quality of Life), Gordon Nardell QC and Kevin Rowan (TUC), and was chaired by Lucy Anderson MEP.

There were positive views about local authorities collaborating to successfully run the railways in Northern Sweden, despite the challenge of a dispersed network and comparatively lower passenger numbers. But there was concern regarding splitting infrastructure management into multiple contracts.

Research showed that trust in the Swedish railways has declined regarding punctuality, and passengers also reported feeling increasingly unsafe, partly due to a reduction of on-board staff.

Between 2000 and 2011 investment in the Swedish railways remained lower than the average invested by 15 other European countries.

Far from a golden age for the UK’s railways, passengers have seen increasing fares,

taxpayers now put twice the amount of public subsidy into rail, investment on any scale remains publicly resourced, and the fragmented network is not delivering for passengers, workers or the economy.

According to Dr Ian Taylor, rail privatisation costs around an extra £1bn every year due to factors including shareholder dividends, fragmentation into multiple organisations, and outsourcing of some Network Rail work. Dividend leakage is significant – between 2003/4 and 2011/12 five regional train operating companies paid out £555m in dividends, while £300m is urgently needed to replace the entire Mersey Rail electrics fleet.

Since privatisation, fares have risen by an average of 23% above inflation, and for long distance operators the increase has been over 40%. Passenger Focus data shows that an unrestricted UK return fare is 109% more than continental European comparators (France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland).

Between 2011/12 and 2013/14 only two train companies out of 19 succeeded in operating with no net subsidy. One of these was publicly owned Directly Operated Railways (East Coast), which achieved better reliability and punctuality performance than many private operators, while returning a surplus on its budget after paying around £200m per year back to the Treasury.

Furthermore, claims that liberalisation would result in a new era of improvements from private sector investment have not been borne out. Analysis by Transport for Quality of Life shows that genuine at-risk private finance represents approximately 1% of total annual investment in rail.

In terms of the workforce, the frequency of industrial disputes went up after liberalisation – with network-wide collective bargaining and dispute resolution destroyed, removing a major economy of scale. The resulting disparities in pay and conditions appear unfair and are a recipe for industrial disputes.

Passenger growth is attributed by some to rail liberalisation, but evidence indicates that

it is largely driven by growth in economic activity, changes to commuting patterns, and increased levels of, mostly public, investment. Passenger growth in the UK between 1995 and 2012 rose along a similar path to that of France’s publicly-owned railway.

From the legal perspective Gordon Nardell QC, of Essex Chambers, stated, “The very fact that so many undertakings controlled by public sector incumbents bid successfully to run UK services – in the most deregulated rail environment in the EU... suggests that those bodies are well able to hold their own and even out-perform the private sector in terms of meeting PSC [Public Service Contract] specifications”. It is counter-intuitive to suggest the role of public sector operators should be restricted further in the name of competition, when they are competing successfully and setting the benchmark.

The TUC remains concerned that the Fourth Railway Package will repeat and embed the mistakes of UK rail privatisation across Europe. It should be up to Member States to decide how to run their railways. The package will not deliver in the best interests of passengers, taxpayers and the workforce. The TUC and rail unions’ Action for Rail campaign is building support for opposition to the Fourth Railway Package – as part of our long-standing campaign for an integrated, national railway under public ownership.

» To view presentations visit <http://actionforrail.org> the-future-of-rail-in-europe-briefing-in-the-european-parliament/

Sharon Sukhram





# FIREFIGHTERS PREPARING TO FIGHT



[ Dave Green, FBU national officer, reports ]

THE TORY GOVERNMENT IS PREPARING A WIDE RANGE OF ATTACKS on the labour movement. The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) has highlighted at least five key attacks we will have to prepare for immediately: more austerity cuts; proposals to give Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) a role in the Fire Service; mutualisation and privatisation; our conditions of service and the anti-union laws.

The new Tory government plans to impose more austerity. They cut 1,800 firefighter jobs last year – the worst cuts in the history of the fire and rescue service. They cut nearly 7,000 firefighter jobs over the last five years – 12% of all firefighter jobs. The Tories plan to carry on cutting until at least 2018, so we will have to continue our campaign to stop the cuts to our fire and rescue service.

The Tories plan to allow PCCs to interfere with the fire and rescue service. PCCs barely have an elected mandate and no experience or expertise in the fire and rescue service. Integration with the police will choke the fire and rescue service and it threatens our neutrality. We will fight to maintain our relations with communities and our independence.

The Tory manifesto said they would promote more mutual organisations. We know that during the last Parliament they tried to sneak through a change in the law to allow mutuals in the fire and rescue service. Some 97% of our members in Cleveland voted to oppose them. Firefighters know this is a fundamental threat to pay and conditions, pensions and jobs. Mutuals are the thin end of the privatisation wedge. We will build a campaign to defend our service from the profiteers.

The Tories also want to attack firefighters' conditions of service. They got a management consultant to cook up a report for them earlier this year. It's not published yet – but we know it will be an attack on the FBU. We are ready to defend our right to national collective bargaining.

The Tories' anti-union bill threatens to raise the balloting threshold for firefighters and other public sector workers – especially those who've also been prepared to take strike action. They want to take away our facility time, rip up check off and allow agency scabs to undermine industrial action.

Firefighters, alongside all public sector workers, have had a tough five years. The next five may be even tougher. But we have one advantage – our trade union. With collective organisation we have strength. With that strength we can support our members and take our place with other trade unionists in defending the labour movement.



Jeremy Corbyn supporting the resistance

## SUPPORT THE NATIONAL GALLERY WORKERS

[ Our industrial correspondent reports ]

THE PCS DISPUTE AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY has seen a vibrant campaign taking on an intransigent employer.

In February, PCS rep Candy Udwin was suspended for sharing information about the proposed privatisation with her union. She was sacked on 15 May. An employment tribunal on 10 June met to hear Candy's interim appeal against her dismissal.

At the tribunal Candy, backed by her union, won a 'continuation of employment' order. This means, while she remains off work, she will receive full pay and benefits from the date of her dismissal pending the full hearing in October. PCS General Secretary Mark Serwotka described the ruling as "great news" and said: "The gallery should now see sense and reinstate Candy immediately".

The following day, Candy's co-workers were on strike for their 35th day of industrial action since the dispute began. By the end of July, workers there will have taken 45 days of strike action in one of the most intense disputes in recent British industrial history. Members at the National Gallery remain determined to see off privatisation plans and to see their rep and colleague reinstated.

On 11 June they were joined on the picket line by Labour leadership contender Jeremy Corbyn MP, who told the rally:

"That Candy Udwin has been sacked simply for representing her members shows that workers and trade unions need greater legal protections. Instead this government proposes legal changes to tip the balance even further in favour of unscrupulous employers.

"The management of the National Gallery must reinstate Candy and abandon plans to privatise dedicated staff who look after our cultural assets. I urge the incoming director Gabriele Finaldi to meet with the union and resolve this dispute."

Support the dispute: See [www.pcs.org.uk](http://www.pcs.org.uk) for more information and follow @NGNotForSale on Twitter

# WHY WE'RE TAKING ACTION

[ Barnet Unison is in dispute with the borough's Tory council. Branch secretary, John Burgess, explains why ]

SIX YEARS AGO BARNET'S TORY COUNCIL introduced a policy known as *Future Shape* which morphed into *easyCouncil*. This imposed a series of tariffs on residents wishing to access a range of services. A basic service would be offered to residents at a fixed price, but 'fast track' services might be available if you paid extra. This approach was quickly abandoned by the consultant-driven *One Barnet* programme, which led to numerous council services being outsourced/privatised in the space of three years. These included Adult Social Care, Housing, Revenues and Benefit, Public Health, and Mortuary Services. Many services were outsourced to the notorious Capita, while Barnet Homes – to whom housing options were outsourced – have been the focus of high profile campaigns against social cleansing.

Our members have seen hundreds of colleagues transferred to other employers. This has often meant redundancy, as the new employer has moved jobs out of the borough and Greater London to places as far afield as Belfast, Carlisle, Coventry, Southampton and Darlington.

Now we are in the final phase for what remains of council services. Barnet has branded itself the "Commissioning

Council". Very few people know what commissioning really means, but if you work for the Council we all know it means that we will no longer be working for the Council.

On 3 March 2015 Barnet Council agreed its next five commissioning plans all of which propose "Alternative Delivery Models", jargon for working for a different employer.

The council services now at risk of outsourcing are Early Years, Library Services, Adult and Community Services, Street Scene Services (e.g. Waste & Recycling, Street Cleansing, Parks and Transport), Education and Skills and School Meals Services. These are, of course, vital public services.

Over the past six years Barnet Unison has made numerous well documented attempts to speak to the Council. Our voice, however, has been drowned out by expensive consultants who appear to have been running the Council for all this time.

We exhausted the internal procedures to try to avoid having to register a dispute. We finally declared a formal dispute with the Council on 4 December 2014. Despite this on 12 January 2015 Barnet Council made a decision to put Education & Skills

and School Meals services out for sale. Three big multinational contractors are now bidding to win a contract valued at almost £1bn.

We are still waiting for the Council to return to the negotiating table but time is marching on.

» Our members want to work for the Council. They want to be directly accountable to the residents of Barnet;

» our members don't want to work for an employer which will have to place the shareholders' legal demands before local residents' needs;

» our members don't want to work for an employer which uses zero-hours contracts;

» our members don't want to work for an employer which will not pay the London Living Wage as a basic minimum;

» our members don't want to work for an employer which won't allow their colleagues to belong to their pension scheme; and

» our members don't want to work for an employer which will take jobs out of the borough.

That's why 87% of our members working for the Council voted Yes to taking strike action.





# KEEP PRIDE POLITICAL RESIST CORPORATE POWER

This year the Pride March in London has been beset with rows that show the faultlines in current LGBT politics - pink corporates vs LGBT workers - and the ongoing deliberate depoliticisation of Pride. **Maria Exall**, CWU member and Chair of the TUC LGBT Committee, explains

**CONTRARY TO PROMISES** made to both Lesbian and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM) and LGBT trade union representatives, the trade union block at this year's Pride has been relegated from the head of parade section to half way back - even though we are celebrating the 30 year anniversary of LGBT activists' support for the miners' struggle in 1985. The official explanation is logistics - the trade union section is too big - but the Pride in London (PiL) Board representatives also said it was important for them to give their big sponsors prominence on the march, ie Barclays, their prime sponsor, Starbucks and Citi Group, who are all marching up front.

In a second row about the application of

the UKIP LGBT section to join the march the PiL Board - under grassroots pressure - revoked their permission to march as a group for 'safety' reasons.

These rows should not spoil the day. We need the biggest ever trade union contingent on Pride on the 27 June to claim the history of solidarity that LGSM and the film *Pride* remind us of.

In the long term though there is a job to be done around future Prides. Firstly we need greater accountability to the many and diverse LGBT community groups and organisations than currently exists from the PiL Board - whose franchise will come up for renewal in the next year or two. Their Community Advisory Board was only

asked its opinion on both the LGSM issue and the UKIP issue after the decisions had been made!

Also we need greater public sponsorship (the £100,000 from the GLA is not enough to cover the £800,000 costs) in order to ensure a properly representative and community based Pride. Any future Labour mayor selected/elected should pledge this to counter the corporate domination of Pride.

The narrowing of political debate in the run up to, and since, the General Election is affecting the organisation of Pride and is in danger of having a corrosive effect on LGBT politics in the UK. The Tories have wanted to depoliticise Pride ever since David Cameron decided to adopt a more socially liberal position in the run up to the 2010 General Election to hide their shocking homophobic and transphobic record. But now we are witnessing an attempt to promote a rainbow aspect to their blue collar conservatism. Corporate interests want to take over the territory of the trade unions. Resistance to this is necessary in the coming period whether at Pride this year or in our LGBT communities and workplaces all year round.

» The trade union section of the Pride march is assembling at Baker Street / Blandford Street junction midday onwards on Saturday 27 June - come and join us!



## A TALE OF TWO ELECTIONS

**Jon Rogers**, National Executive Council, Unison, reports in a personal capacity from Unison's recent conference in Glasgow

**THIS YEAR'S UNISON CONFERENCE WAS DOMINATED** by the outcome of the General Election. However, owing to the strict timetables governing Conference business, almost all the motions for discussion had been submitted months before the General Election, with a couple of emergency composites admitted to deal with Unison's response to the Tory victory.

If the Conference was overshadowed by one election in the recent past, it also took place in the shadow of another, as yet unannounced, due to take place soon - for Unison General Secretary.

Dave Prentis's speech anticipated Conference support for a lobby of Tory Party Conference. Members of the NEC noted he had moved

leftwards since their pre-Conference meeting just a couple of weeks before.

While the current General Secretary has not yet clarified whether he is running, two contenders from the rank and file left have emerged. Knowsley Branch Secretary and Socialist Party member Roger Bannister, who has come second in the last three elections for General Secretary, has declared. But he refused formally to participate in an open hustings meeting which saw NEC member Karen Reissmann win the support of those present over her fellow NEC member, and former General Secretary candidate, Paul Holmes.

With no timetable yet for the election, it remains unclear who else will run, either from the rank and file or the officer machine, although the latter is unlikely if Prentis runs again. Some have speculated he could use a legal loophole to avoid a further election to remain in office for a period, given his age. Bearing in mind the political damage which such chicanery would do at a time when the union is under attack from the Tories, such a misjudgement can hopefully be ruled out.

# GREECE DEAL OR DEFAULT?

Michael Roberts reports

**BY THE TIME YOU READ THIS**, Greece will have either defaulted on loans owed to the IMF or the left wing Syriza government will have reached a "humiliating" [according to Greek Prime Minister Tsipras] agreement with the Troika (the Euro credit institutions, the IMF and the European Central Bank) to carry through a new round of austerity measures in return for the release of funds to meet their obligations.

The cruel irony in this tortuous saga is that any 'bailout' funds released would not be used to meet the wages of public sector workers, state pensions and health and education services, but instead would just repay the IMF and the ECB for previous loans! None of this money will benefit the Greek people. All it will mean is that Greece is not in default.

The Greek economy is deeply depressed. Unemployment stands at 25%. Youth unemployment is at 50%. Greece's GDP

has shrunk by 25% since the start of the crisis in 2009.

The Syriza government was elected by a handsome margin to cancel this "odious" debt burden (now at 180% of GDP) and reverse the austerity measures, imposed on Greeks by the Troika. During the negotiations since February, in the four month extension of the existing 'bailout agreement', the Syriza government has conceded much to the Troika. In desperation it has stopped paying health service and school suppliers, so that medicines have disappeared from the hospital shelves, and books from the schools. Bills have not been paid so that public sector workers get their wages and pensioners get their meagre pensions.

Yet the only concession that the Troika has made is to lower the target for the budget surplus by the government. More austerity will only mean a deeper depression so that, as GDP falls further, the

debt to GDP ratio will rise, not fall. The last straw was when the Troika said this surplus must be achieved by raising VAT by 10% on electricity for people's homes and by cutting the pensions of the poorest retirees. Pension payments per pensioner are actually below the Eurozone average.

Syriza now says enough is enough. They are not going to make any further repayments to the IMF unless these Troika demands are dropped and the Troika agrees to a debt restructuring that would reduce the burden of payments over the next decade. Even the IMF recognises that this debt can never be repaid and there needs to be some form of write-off or relaxation of the terms.

At present the Eurogroup refuses to withdraw its demands and Syriza refuses to accede to them. The most likely result is that the Greek government will have defaulted. This could still lead to a desperate deal at 'ten minutes past midnight'; or failing that, lead to the ECB withdrawing its credit to the Greek banks, which are losing deposits by the billions and have 40% of their loans to Greek businesses not being serviced. They would be bust.

The government would have to introduce capital controls to stop money being withdrawn (especially abroad). If this situation continued, eventually the government would not be able to pay its workers or the pensions and would have to issue IOUs for euros, which would quickly lose their face value. In effect, Greece would have been driven out of the euro credit system. Then the question would be whether the Euro leaders would formally 'exit' Greece from the Eurozone institutions, forcing them to introduce a new drachma or face a massive euro credit meltdown.

Syriza must now act in the interests of its own people. It must refuse to pay any more of the odious debt. But it won't be enough just to introduce a new currency and hope that Greek capitalism can then compete. No, Syriza must break the grip of the Greek oligarchs who run Greek industry and banking, and control the media and capitalist politicians. The banks must be brought into public ownership and the privatisations must be reversed. The major companies should be controlled by the unions and government as part of a national plan for jobs and investment. Use the money saved from paying back the Troika for state investment.

Greece cannot do this on its own. Syriza, in conjunction with other like-minded governments and the wider labour movement, should begin a pan-European campaign for jobs, investment and growth. This would get a huge response and put pressure on the Euro leaders to end their pro-capitalist policies or be removed.

» Michael Roberts blogs at <http://thenextrecession.wordpress.com/>





# TTIP, THE EU REFERENDUM AND THE LEFT

**John Hilary**, Executive Director, War on Want, explains that the forces promoting TTIP are in retreat and kicks off the debate on what attitude the left should take on the EU referendum

**THE FIGHT IS HOTTING UP OVER THE TRANSATLANTIC TRADE and Investment Partnership (TTIP)**, the controversial EU-US trade deal that threatens our jobs, our public services and our democracy itself. The mass campaign backed by War on Want, the TUC and hundreds of other trade unions and campaign groups across Europe is building momentum. The forces promoting the deal are under attack and in retreat.

The European Parliament was asked to pass a pro-TTIP resolution this June that would have given the EU trade commissioner Cecilia Malmström a major boost in her efforts to complete the deal. Along with others from across Europe, I travelled to Strasbourg in order to remind MEPs that over two million of their constituents have now signed a European Citizens' Initiative rejecting TTIP and the parallel EU-Canada deal, CETA. If they wished to maintain any credibility, we told them, MEPs would need to drop their support for the deal.

The pressure was effective. The German social democrats who control the Parliament (and support TTIP) were so rattled that they cancelled the vote at the last minute. They then allowed an 8am motion to go through from the Parliament's conservative group blocking any further debate on TTIP, even before some MEPs had realised such a motion had been presented. This was supposed to be the first resolution in support of TTIP from the new European Parliament elected in 2014. The fact that neither the vote nor the debate could take place is a blow to the legitimacy of the TTIP project, and to the credibility of the EU's free trade agenda.

The Parliament was abuzz with questions as to why its President, Martin Schulz of Germany's social democratic party, had taken the decision to stop the vote from going ahead. The official reason given (that the number of amendments made it too complex) was dismissed by all sides as an obvious smokescreen, as the parliamentary procedures were perfectly capable of dealing with the vote.

In reality, as most media reports concurred, the social democrats are in crisis over their support for TTIP, and divided

over the inclusion of the investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) mechanism that would allow US corporations to sue EU member states for loss of profits resulting from public policy measures that might affect their bottom line. Stung by mounting public criticism at home, Labour MEPs broke ranks and backed an amendment saying no to ISDS. Rather than risk further internal division, the Germans pulled the vote.

The crisis over TTIP speaks to a deeper dilemma for the British left and its traditionally positive attitude towards the EU. Since the now famous address by Jacques Delors to the TUC in 1988, the labour movement has generally backed EU membership in light of the higher social standards it could enjoy as a result. For many, ceding democratic powers to Brussels was a price worth paying if it meant access to labour rights we would not enjoy if the UK went it alone.

With an in-out EU referendum coming up within the next two years, the left needs to review its position. The original cost-benefit analysis no longer holds good if we are now being offered the vision of an EU where only the interests of capital are represented. In this respect, TTIP is symptomatic of a growing imbalance as the EU lurches further and further to the right. If we lose democratic sovereignty and see our social standards and labour rights abandoned into the bargain, why would we stay in the EU?

We are far from the end of the story on TTIP, as negotiations still have years to run before they have any chance of reaching a deal. The debate on EU membership, on the other hand, is starting in earnest. It offers us the opportunity to hold a full public discussion on the sort of Europe we wish to see in the future – a customs union devoted exclusively to the interests of big business, or a social programme based on decent work, dignity and human rights for all?

» Any *Briefing* readers who have not already signed the European Citizens' Initiative against TTIP and CETA are encouraged to do so as soon as possible at [waronwant.org/eci](http://waronwant.org/eci).



# TURKEY A NEW ERA?

**Tayfun Hatipoglu** reports from Turkey on the recent parliamentary elections

**JUNE'S ELECTIONS PRODUCED A DRAMATIC RESULT** – a shock to many, especially to the Islamic AK Party which lost its absolute majority for the first time since it came to power in 2002. Key to the defeat of the ruling party was the big success of the left wing People's Democratic Party (HDP), which won over six million votes and 80 seats in Parliament.

This represents the beginning of a new era in Turkish politics and the end of the long dark night for the left that began with the military coup in 1980. This was a coup organised between the CIA and the right wing elite of Turkish society that put an end to the pre-revolutionary turmoil of the 1970s through the imprisonment of 650,000 activists, the banning of the trade unions and political parties and the closure of Parliament and the media.

The constitution of Turkey today still retains many of the rules introduced by the military in the early 1980s. These include significant restrictions on the electoral system – a massive 10% requirement before any party can enter Parliament, known here as “the barrage”, and a law banning the standing of two or more parties on a common electoral platform – that were designed to keep the Kurdish and left movements out of Parliament.

The massive protests in Istanbul's Gezi Park and elsewhere two years ago had the potential to start a movement to challenge these undemocratic barriers. But the Gezi Park movement, despite the spirit and bravery of its participants, failed to grasp its opportunities. By not focusing on the need to challenge the undemocratic electoral system, taking a clear stand on the Kurdish question, and creating an organised political movement, the Gezi struggle left a vacuum in Turkish society. This has now been filled by the HDP.

The origin of the HDP lies in the nationalist and socialist movement for Kurdish independence with the antecedents of the party acting as the political wing of the military PKK organisation – something similar to the relationship between Sinn Féin and the IRA in Ireland. However, the formation of the HDP was part of a new strategy to broaden the Kurdish movement into a united Kurdish and Turkish left wing movement to transform society. To this end, the new party opened its ranks to a wide range of radical tendencies, including sections of the socialist movement, feminist and gay rights activists and environmental campaigners. It also adopted, in addition to its

normal Kurdish candidates, a series of prominent Turkish left wing figures as candidates in the Turkish areas of the country. By creating an umbrella movement, the HDP successfully overcame the law preventing different parties standing together in elections.

The new left party decided to challenge the 10% “barrage” head-on by securing more than 10% of the national vote. This was a big risk which, had it failed, would have caused the party to lose its existing Members of Parliament who were elected as independents. Such a failure could also have given the ruling AK Party a big enough majority to introduce its new executive presidential system. This would have transferred Parliament's power to President Erdogan and effectively introduced an elected one-man dictatorship. So the stakes were high in this election and large sections of the Turkish left were very doubtful about the wisdom of the HDP's electoral approach.

The end result, with the HDP gaining over 13% of the vote, vindicated the party's strategy. It also contributed to the defeat of the government and opened up all kinds of new possibilities.

In contrast to the traditional top-down and highly centralist model of the Turkish and Kurdish left, the HDP is trying to build a movement more along the lines of Syriza in Greece and Podemos in Spain. Its electoral success was immediately greeted with messages of congratulations from these organisations.

However, for the HDP to build on this initial success, it will need to handle the challenges that lie ahead very carefully. Firstly, it

needs to decide on whether to participate in a coalition with the other two opposition parties. If such a coalition was strictly limited to the short term implementation of democratic changes such as lowering the “barrage”, increasing the minimum wage and pensions, action against the corrupt leadership of the outgoing government, a halt to privatisations and positive moves to end the Kurdish struggle, all in preparation for fresh elections, then such participation could lead to a big increase in the HDP's credibility and support. But if participating in a coalition drew it into implementing neo-liberal economic policies, this would be a big mistake.

The HDP also needs to continue to move away from military struggle, develop a clear alternative to capitalism and find the best way to explain and popularise this to the Turkish and Kurdish population.







[ Ian Malcolm-Walker, Bournemouth West CLP, looks back on two incidents ]

#### It's Imperialism, Stupid

You can forget the assassination of Franz Ferdinand or the invasion of Belgium – the real motive behind British involvement in World War 1 was naked imperialism.

In July 1915 South Africa, acting on behalf of the British Empire, completed its conquest of German South West Africa (*Deutsch-Südwestafrika*).

After the war, the territory came under the control of Britain, and then was made a South African colony until independence as Namibia 75 years later.

This was one of four imperialist gains in Africa by Britain and her allies. German Cameroon (Kamerun) was occupied by Britain and France during 1914-1916. Togoland was invaded and divided between Britain and France in 1914. German East Africa was divided between Britain and Belgium.

#### It's the Banks, Stupid

Also in July 1915 300 US Marines landed at Port-au-Prince in Haiti.

The invasion was ordered to “protect American and foreign” interests. A further reason was to ditch the Haitian constitution which forbade foreign ownership of land.

The Haitian government had been getting large loans from both US and French banks since the 1890s and was having problems in meeting debt repayments.

Following the July 2015 action, 40% of the national income was used to ease the debt repayment to both US and French banks. This froze economic development. For the next 19 years, advisers of the US governed the country, enforced by the United States Marine Corps.

# CELEBRATING VICTOR JARA

[ Tony Corden reports on a recent visit to Chile and how the Machynlleth festival in mid-Wales at the end of July helps keep alive the cultural legacy of the country's most famous popular musician ]

**GENERAL PINOCHET'S BRUTAL MILITARY COUP IN CHILE** on 11 September 1973 tried to stamp out a progressive culture which was becoming the threat of a good example. The democratically elected President Salvador Allende died in the coup and thousands were tortured and killed in the aftermath.

A key element of the dictatorship was the attempt to erase memory. It became dangerous to own a record by Victor Jara, one of the most significant troubadours of the time, and many people threw their records away. Many people were “disappeared”.

The dictatorship came to an end in 1990 and since then there has been a retrieval of memory through the determination of various groups to discover what happened to their loved ones and challenge the military's efforts to cover up its crimes.

Torture was institutionalised in Pinochet's Chile and there were torture centres all over the country. An example is “38 Calle Londres”, located in a leafy and picturesque Santiago street. The military went to great lengths to hide what went on there, changing its name and turning it into a military museum. Now, thanks to the incredible persistence of campaigners, the building's previous usage as a torture centre is acknowledged and it is open to the public so that people can know the truth.

On a recent visit to Chile Stadium, now called Victor Jara Stadium, where Victor and many others were killed, the caretaker went to great lengths to show me the evidence that torture had taken place there and described how difficult it had been to stop the evidence being destroyed.

Despite the end of the dictatorship in 1990, the legacy of neo-liberalism and privatisation has remained. However, Chilean student protests demanding quality public education, which began in March 2011, have developed into a vast social movement which has captured global attention.

Under Pinochet, Chile became a laboratory for monetarist policies and was held up as a shining example of their success. The student protests have exploded this myth and fuelled a popular uprising demonstrating the degree of discontent with the current system.

A resurgence of the delayed legacy of Salvador Allende is taking place through the educational reforms and the commitment to a new democratic constitution. However, many key issues remain unaddressed, such as the ongoing struggle of the indigenous Mapuche for social justice.

Joan Jara, the English widow of the visionary musician and theatre director Victor Jara, has campaigned tirelessly for the past 40 years for justice. She says: “Victor's case is emblematic as he was such a well known figure. What happens to all the lesser known cases if Victor's is not dealt with?”

There has been a wall of silence from the military which in recent years has begun to crumble. Now at last, a retired general living in the US, Barrientos, is going on trial in Florida for the torture and murder of Victor.

A common slogan in Allende's time read: “There is no revolution without song”. It was in many ways a renaissance with amazing creativity and a blurring of the arts and politics. Rather than be reduced to a footnote in Chilean history, there is now a resurgence of interest in this time as a cultural resource that we can learn from in the 21st century. This is seen in the

awakening of progressive left movements across Latin America in the past 20 years.

In and around the small Welsh market town of Machynlleth in mid-Wales a three day summer festival has been taking place for over ten years inspired by the music, theatre and writings of Victor Jara. Attended by musicians, poets, progressive politicians and dancers, it is a three day jamboree rooted in the desire for social justice. For more information, visit [www.elsuenoexiste.com](http://www.elsuenoexiste.com).



## OUR HIDDEN HISTORIES

[ Mike Phipps reviews *The World is my Country*, by Emily Johns & Gabriel Carlyle, published by Peace News Press ]

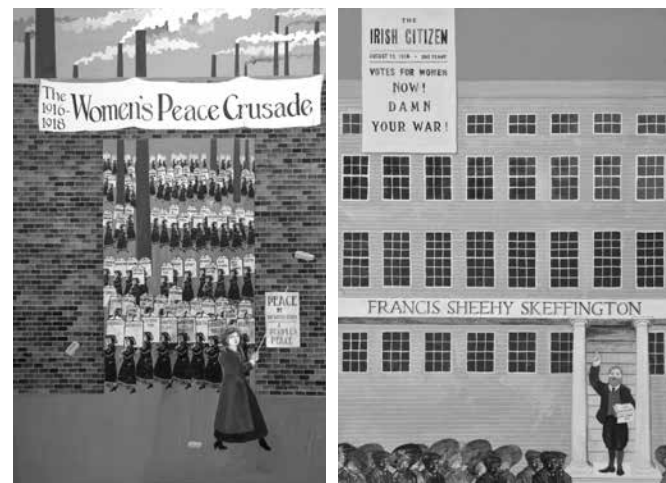
**THIS IS A SHORT, VERY ACCESSIBLE BOOKLET** by two long-serving peace activists about people and movements who opposed World War One.

» People like Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, who was detained by the British military during the 1916 Easter Rising and summarily executed. Two days earlier he had braved a hail of bullets to try to rescue a wounded British soldier.

» Movements like the Women's Peace Crusade, the first truly popular campaign in Britain linking feminism, socialism and anti-militarism, mobilising several thousand demonstrators in northern towns towards the end of the War.

» People like Te Puea Herangi, a Maori princess, who led such a successful movement of communal resistance to the War in New Zealand, that the authorities accused her of having German ancestry.

*The World is my Country* unearths many other nuggets of information and is available for £6 from [www.theworldismycountry.info](http://www.theworldismycountry.info)





# NYE: THE POLITICAL LIFE OF ANEURIN BEVAN

[ Martin Upham recalls the age when Labour had an identity - in his review of the most recent book on Nye Bevan written by Nicklaus Thomas-Symonds, published by IB Tauris ]

**TOWARDS THE END OF NICKLAUS THOMAS-SYMONDS' NEW BIOGRAPHY,** we see Nye reflecting on the 1959 election defeat. His last Conference speech affirmed that the future belonged to Labour, a view none of today's leadership candidates can confidently hold. The author, newly-elected MP for Torfaen, will have plenty of time on the Opposition benches to reflect on these two polls, one (1959) from the dawn of consumerism, the other (2015) after years of austerity.

Outside Wales, Bevan is remembered only as founder of the NHS - not a bad monument! His several biographers, including Michael Foot, diverge widely in their assessment. This dynamic man began as a miner, but ambition and conviction speedily propelled him into local government and, aged just 32, into Parliament. For 30 years he was unmatched in combining authority in the House with compelling extra-parliamentary advocacy. Among modern Labour politicians only Tony Benn - from a very different background - excelled in both. Each was a man of power, though Benn had eleven years in Cabinet to Bevan's six. Of the great socialist orators we cannot hear Hardie, Maclean or the young MacDonald. Bevan's conference speeches and rally orations survive, most memorably his savage destruction of Eden's reputation during the Suez fiasco.

Ideologically he was firmly on the left.

Nationalising the 'commanding heights' of the economy was a central conviction; his final illness removed him from the scene just as the dogmatic Gaitskell launched his attempt to delete the socialist Clause IV of the Party's then constitution. It is inconceivable that he would have joined in though Thomas-Symonds, who can seem uncomfortable with this, points out that he was a critic of 'Morrisonian' state corporations. Contrast his view of nuclear weapons. Though not a party to Attlee's secret decision to build a 'British' bomb he saw it as sustaining British socialist influence in the world. One of the most moving passages of Foot's book describes how Bevan turned devastatingly on the unilateralists - his own closest political friends - at the 1957 conference. Thomas-Symonds is more neutral.

This same mercurial figure was a well-known *bon viveur* with friends on the right, a powerful journalist, though author only of one book, *In Place of Fear*, and unafraid to take Beaverbrook's coin. He was briefly expelled from the Party for advocating a popular front and attempts were again made to get rid of him for factionalism in the 1950s. In fact he was an incorrigible individualist; his failure to organise against a brutal right demoralised his friends and the wider left. He was a serious internationalist, committed to freedom for the colonies even if it meant opposing his own party. Had he lived - he

died as Deputy Leader - he might well have succeeded Gaitskell after the latter's death in 1963 and led Labour to victory the following year, though Thomas-Symonds fairly observes that Harold Wilson might already have been better placed to succeed.

But the NHS was his great achievement, and if we don't get the passion with which he drove it through the parliamentary process we do get the pragmatism that finally allowed him to bring it off. What a colossal achievement it was to bring together the various health providers under one umbrella without compromising the basic principles the whole Attlee government was determined to incorporate. Facing appalling opposition from the BMA, which happily sees the world differently these days, he stuck to his last. It was a great triumph of political will. No Briton under 70 is not in his debt.

The editors might have helped the author, cutting out repetitions here and there. This Bevan is not the familiar one from newsreels or Michael Foot's flawed romantic hero, but a pragmatic - even a diminished - Bevan. Certainly he was not the 'intransigent ideologue' of legend, but any observer, friendly or hostile, of Bevan's career could only conclude that he was driven by conviction. Thirty years on, a party desperate for office traded in its beliefs. It has just paid a heavy price for New Labour. What withering scorn Nye would have hurled at it.

## P E R I S C O P E

### STAY AND FIGHT!

Newly elected MP Richard Burgon showed the way forward at the recent Bakers' Union conference, telling anyone thinking of leaving Labour, "Do you think that makes Blairites feel sad? To receive a letter from a socialist saying they've resigned? No, it makes them happy."

### LOSER

Turncoat Laura Booth finished her political career with a cracker in Hazel Grove. "Only the Lib Dems can beat the Tories here", said Laura on a typical Lib Dem leaflet. It went on "Councillor Laura Booth was Labour's first choice Parliamentary Candidate here until last Autumn, when she quit Labour, and is now backing Lisa Smart to beat the Tories." Except she didn't and the Tories won the seat.

### AND ANOTHER

That was about as successful as the Tories' Justin Hinchcliffe, the Chairman of the Conservative Association in Tottenham, who called on Tory voters to back the Lib Dem's Lynne Featherstone in Hornsey and Wood Green. Catherine West won for Labour.

### CLASSIC UKIP

Classic advice from UKIP at the recent election, "Unfortunately, it simply is not possible for our candidates to read up on and fully understand all the different causes they are asked to support and, secondly, to then follow up with the paperwork required and still have any time to go out and campaign! Another potential problem is that with the sheer number of them, some are bound to be contradictory. Therefore, the Party's advice to its candidates is not to sign up to any declarations or pledges until after the election is over." UKIP's Stuart Agnew had it off to a 't': "Mr Agnew has asked me to tell you that, if elected, he would be more than happy to hear from you again and to reconsider your campaign, which he regards as a worthy cause."

### BLAIR'S BLOOD MONEY

Several Labour candidates, despite being desperate for funds, turned down blood money from Tony Blair, who sent £1,000 cheques into the supposedly winnable key seats. Perhaps the most significant one to refuse the cash was someone who actually served in the armed forces in the Iraq war - Sophy Gardner in Gloucester.

### WELL DONE NEIL

Neil Findlay MSP called for the recent football friendly between Scotland and Qatar to be called off following deaths of workers building the stadiums for the World Cup. That's the man who should have been Leader of the Labour Party in Scotland, rightly reasoning Labour wouldn't defeat the SNP from the right. Meanwhile Andy Burnham is distancing himself from a picture he had taken with Sepp Blatter and the World Cup...

### A WINNING SLOGAN

Leadership hopeful Liz Kendall says she wants a "Stronger Economy and a Fairer Society". Coincidentally this was the election slogan of the Liberal Democrats in the 2015 General Election, which resulted in them being reduced to just eight seats. Is she running for the leadership of the right party?

## ✉ LETTERS ✉

### LABOUR NEEDS A VISIONARY LEADER

WE NEED SOMEONE WHO REFLECTS THE DREAMS of the Labour grassroots and who listens to communities, someone who is a democratic socialist first and not a machine politician. We need someone who is honest and passionate who stands up for what we believe in - more equality and democratic public ownership of some industries such as mail and rail. We should publicly own some banks and big pharma with free or cheap drugs. No longer would people with serious life conditions be denied expensive drugs to rob them of a few extra years of life because of the market.

We want a leader who does not accept the straitjacket of neo-liberalism, but who launches a war on poverty, fights for a living wage, promotes trade unionism, a shorter working week and earlier retirement. We need someone who understands the future and the possibilities of new technology, such as driverless transport, but who also sees this as an opportunity to free time-poor working humanity so we all have more time to enjoy life fully. I would also like a leader committed to the benefits of free public transport and renewable energy.

We also need a leader who is an internationalist who works in partnership with other countries to address global human needs, which could stimulate a global economic recovery. We must work with sister parties across the world so the left is campaigning globally for similar things - a global living wage, more democratic public ownership, decent global health, homes and sanitation.

We also need a leader who supports power being given back to the grassroots with annual conference making policy, CLPs deciding their own parliamentary shortlists and picking their own candidates to make us more representative. We should also have a minimum membership fee of £5 and have fees on a sliding scale based on income to help us to build a mass party.

Barry Ewart, Leeds



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# JEREMY CORBYN IS LABOUR'S BEST BET

## OUTSIDE LEFT

An occasional  
column which  
takes an  
iconoclastic  
look at the  
world

Bookies underestimate him - but the Party shouldn't, says **David Osland**

**I'M NOT JUST SAYING THIS** because I managed to get twenty quid on #jeremy4leader at 100-1, with a side bet on Burnham that will more than recoup the stake if I don't get my hands on the two grand.

But the inclusion of the honourable member for Islington North on the ballot paper for the Labour leadership contest offers the Labour left perhaps its first meaningful chance for a fresh start in three decades of uninterrupted vertiginous decline.

Handle this correctly, and we will emerge as a numerically stronger and more intellectually influential milieu, with democratic socialism back on the political radar screen.

And lest the Labour right accuse us of seeking simple factional advantage - because no Blairite would ever succumb to such base considerations, eh? - it is even more important to make the point that a strong showing for Corbyn will benefit the Labour Party as a whole.

That argument will meet derision from many pundits. Some even maintain that the mere inclusion of Jeremy in the race marks a setback for Labour's chances in 2020.

That analysis ignores the sheer depth of the structural crisis facing Labour in the wake of 7 May, as the set of alliances on which it has historically built electoral majorities unravels to the point where it risks sudden collapse.

For starters, the loss of Scotland is no mere swing of the pendulum, with the country inevitably bouncing back to Labour fiefdom status in five years' time. North of the border, Labour has been outflanked on the left by what remains a bourgeois nationalist party, albeit one currently emphasising its social democratic aspect.

Recovery will be the work of a generation, and won't come as a by-product of ramping up our appeal to small c conservatives in the Home Counties. Indeed, if Scotland achieves independence, it may never be achieved at all, at least within an electoral framework relevant to us in England.

Similarly, the automatic Labour vote - with or without gritted teeth - associated

with the progressive middle class has been eroded by the Greens, even if that party has just one MP to show for it.

Then there is Labour's UKIP problem. Writing off the one million working class voters Labour lost to UKIP as racists - and then trying to win them back by a subliminal appeal to racism - is another disaster in the making. I mean, what could possibly go wrong?

And to cap it all, the Tories will do everything they can to place hurdles in the way of Labour's return to office. The coming boundary changes will be the down payment on that.

The latest round of anti-union laws, which will mandate opting in to political funds, is a move that only reinforces the self-inflicted stupidity of the Collins Report.

Meanwhile, union activists are getting restless. Major disaffiliations may not yet be probable, but remain more possible than most *Briefing* readers would like it to be.

Triangulate your way out of all that, Progress! In these circumstances, neo-Blairism is tantamount to Nero putting down his fiddle to court swing voters in East Midlands marginals while Rome burns.

We need a candidate that gets it, and is willing to inject some reality into a debate, and at the last minute, we got one. His name, ladies and gentlemen, is Jeremy Corbyn.

Internal elections in any political party are normally guaranteed snoozefests as far as the wider public is concerned. Normally they

aren't even squeaky bum time for activists, especially where the outcome is a foregone conclusion. The only occasion on which these events come alive is when they provide the framework for a clash of ideas, two or more sets of competing visions for society. So it was, for instance, that the Benn for deputy campaign of 1981 distracted me from the proper pursuit of student hedonism for long enough to sign up for Labour Party activism.

Likewise, Jeremy has the potential to enthuse many young people today to stop doing whatever unspeakable things they do for devilment in place of rolling spliffs on the cover of Psychedelic Furs albums.

Indeed, ideas such as a fully funded NHS, free university education, a return to social housing provision, a renationalised railwork network, a welfare system which allows the old and the sick to live with dignity, strengthened employment rights and environmental protection are central to the task of galvanising Labour support across age groups and even across social classes.

The risky course would be the insistence that a return to generic Blairism without Blair, or the unconvincing confusion of the Miliband years, are the only strategies even worth considering.

Last time I looked, you could still get Jeremy at 20/1. If his leadership campaign does catch fire, even that price is maybe worth a tenner.



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